

the wind at his back. Things were set up for a roaring success like no other Presidential transition in recent memory. Thanks, in large part, to Operation Warp Speed, set up by the prior Congress and administration, we had multiple safe and effective vaccines that were beginning to circulate widely through the country. The new administration's so-called ambitious goal of about a million vaccines per day was already happening before they were sworn in. Thanks to the five bipartisan rescue packages that the Republican-led Senate passed last year, we were primed and ready for a historic economic comeback. Americans were excited and ready to build a comeback summer for the history books.

Yet those incredible tailwinds have largely been squandered. That historic head start has been wasted through bad policy and, in many cases, needlessly divisive leadership.

After a poorly targeted partisan spending package that even liberal economists warned could cause more inflation, American families are now feeling the pain and literally paying the price. After campaign rhetoric and then policy decisions that have made our southern border less secure, a predictable crisis is playing out. After a year of anti-police and anti-rule-of-law rhetoric from too many on the political left, a violent crime surge is hammering communities and making streets less safe all across our country. Oh, and as the new administration pulls back America's presence in the Middle East in a reckless and rushed fashion, terrorist leaders are simply jumping for joy.

This is how you take a country from near-record optimism to serious pessimism in just 2-months' time. This is how you inherit favorable trends in just about every direction imaginable but produce disappointment. Our Democratic friends' big master plan is yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree but even larger. The Washington Democrats' big idea is to borrow, print, and spend our way to even more inflation and even higher costs for American families, along with a historic set of big tax hikes to boot.

My friends across the aisle and down Pennsylvania Avenue should be less concerned about checking leftwing items off activists' wish lists. As more and more of the Democrats' partisan agenda comes online, the American people's pessimism grows and grows. The families of our country need a better approach.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, you know, there is an old saying that I have used quite often, but it bears repeating: Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.

It is a simple yet insightful concept. Human beings often like things to be easy. It is just in our nature. But the reward for easy is very short-lived. Sometimes, if you don't earn it, you don't understand it. If we work hard and challenge ourselves to improve, we reap the benefits for much longer. That is the American way.

I would tell this to my players over the years that I coached. You know, lessons learned that are applied to the football field also apply in life. You know, this country owes you one thing: an opportunity. Sometimes people just need to be shown where that opportunity is at and encouraged to take it, and that is what everyone in this body should be focused on doing: opening doors for opportunity for the people of this country.

President Biden seems determined to close those doors of opportunity by creating, it looks like, a future massive entitlement state.

My Republican colleagues and I have talked a lot about the reckless tax-and-spend plan and the cost of that plan on American families. We are seeing rising inflation, which means dollars from your paycheck are not going as far. We are seeing costs rise on everyday goods that families need: food, gas, diapers—you name it; it is going up. This is a direct result of untargeted spending this year as we are trying to recover from a pandemic, which is the worst time in the world to be throwing government money at a pandemic.

And, now, our Democratic colleagues, it looks like, want to spend \$3.5 trillion more, after spending \$1.9 trillion back in February. And what gets talked about less than the cost of this spending is the social and societal cost of all of these new and expanded programs. While it may not be easy to see or measure, it is no less important, and that is what I want to talk about today.

Let's remember how this started and how we got here. It started with President Biden's announcing two plans—great names. First was the American Families Plan, and then there was the American Jobs Plan. Despite their confusing and similar names, on the face they don't sound that bad. I am for American families, and I am for American jobs.

These plans are not about American families or American jobs. They are full of progressive items that can only pass the Senate through a reconciliation process. There won't be any—there won't be any—Republicans that will vote for this, and Democrats know this. So, now, here we are with our colleagues stuffing the worst parts of President Biden's agenda—I am talking about the most progressive items that

only appease the far left of their base—into their latest package. And all of President Biden's progressive programs cost money, lots and lots of money. And they are going to pay for them with your taxpayer dollars, not the government dollars—taxpayer dollars.

A lot of my colleagues have expressed concern with the Democrats' tax-and-spend spree, but they aren't the only ones sounding the alarm. Folks back home have started to take notice, and there is a lot more collective wisdom among the folks back home than there has been here lately in Washington, DC.

So I brought a couple of letters with me today. These are folks from Alabama who wrote to me about their concerns with President Biden's massive spending plan. Here is what James Merrill from Huntsville, AL, wrote to me:

I have been studying this atrocious "Biden American Families Plan" and it is clear that not only is the cost staggering, the implications of all the rules that will go with it will terribly impact all family life and our freedoms to manage our lives. It blatantly makes the middle-class dependent on the government—cradle to grave. A clear path to socialism."

James, you are exactly right.

And Rosa Hill in Birmingham, AL, had this to say:

I have just listened to President Biden . . . and the ideas are ridiculous. [We] should be helping each other, [not] the government . . . [getting] involved.

Ms. HILL makes an important point. Much of this work can and should be done by our neighbors, churches, and people in the communities. The problem is, we have been conditioned to wait for the government to do the hard work of helping the less fortunate for us rather than doing it ourselves.

Half a century ago, President Lyndon Johnson launched the "War on Poverty." He and leading liberals at the time thought the answer to poverty was to dramatically increase the benefits the Federal Government would give out to the poor. Well, the War on Poverty didn't work like its backers thought it would. The following decade was filled with economic stagnation, high inflation, gas lines, spikes in drug addiction, and a horrifying rise in crimes across our country. Sounds familiar—doesn't it?—just like what is happening today.

Folks, the definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again expecting a different result. We have already tried this. President Biden is determined to try the same worn out policies today: throwing trillions and trillions of taxpayer money at the problem and hoping the problem goes away. It has been and still is the wrong solution.

President Biden's reckless spending spree won't help struggling American families. It will trap them in the endless cycle of dependence on Big Government and taxpayer money. Just take a look at what President Biden has proposed in his American Families Plan:

government-subsidized childcare, free preschool, free community college. Free, free, free; that seems to be the slogan of this administration.

Of course, we all know that there is no such thing as free in this country. I have talked before about the fact that President Biden has proposed 30—you heard me right, 30—new taxes that the Democrats can choose from to pay for these free programs in their next spending package—30 new taxes during a pandemic.

According to one analysis by the Hoover Institution, President Biden's American Families Plan would add 21 million Americans to the Federal Government's list of beneficiaries—21—21 million more people living off the government. Now, there are certainly people out there who need help. We all know that. But this plan opens the floodgates to taxpayer-funded benefits instead of concentrating on those who mostly need it. Under President Biden's plan, your family could make up to \$200,000 and still qualify for Federal healthcare—\$200,000.

We don't have to comb through the history books for examples on how these progressive policies fail. We don't have to look far. Just look at what we have done here recently and the insistence on keeping unemployment benefits historically high.

My Republican colleagues and I have spoken about how these misguided benefits essentially paid people not to work, destroying small businesses all over the country, and our economy's progress has gone down as we try to recover from this pandemic.

Republican Governors across the country recognized the problem and decided to cut out the overly generous benefits months ago. Folks who needed help would get it, but they wouldn't be paid to sit at home, and then they wouldn't be sitting home when they could have been working at jobs that would help their family. Just about every Democratic Governor has insisted on keeping these benefits. Now, what does that tell you, insisting on keeping the benefits and not keeping the benefits?

We have made some terrible decisions just in a short period of time. Well, we can already see the results of what is happening with these benefits. According to the monthly data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, States that cut the Federal expanded benefit are closer to returning to prepandemic employment levels than the States that kept them. Thirteen of the top 15 States with the best unemployment numbers have all ended their Federal expanded unemployment insurance.

Why don't we learn from this misguided policy and not repeat it by spending money on bad outcomes? We seem to continue to do that every time we turn around.

The reckless tax-and-spend spree to advance President Biden's progressive agenda isn't just unaffordable; it is un-American. The United States was

founded on the ideas of personal liberty and self-reliance. It makes you feel good about yourself earning your own way, not government handouts best known as socialism.

Since our founding, people have flocked to the United States because of the opportunity it gives citizens to succeed, not because of cushy government handouts. Our society valued and values hard work, grit, and determination more than the countries most of these folks have left behind.

Again, this country owes you one thing and that is an opportunity to succeed through education and hard work. Democrats want you to believe that you can only succeed with the government's help. Republicans believe in self-reliance and that you have within you God-given skills and potential to work hard and succeed. You have that. That is what this country gives you, which is why President Biden's reckless spending spree and expansion of government programs is so, so disappointing.

The President and Democrats think success is measured by how much taxpayer money the government can spend, but real success is measured by how many people no longer need the help in the first place. Our efforts need to empower people to be free to live and work to build a better life for themselves and their families. The most successful anti-poverty program should eventually put itself out of business.

So I say, enough. Enough of continuously growing the Federal Government. Enough of the reckless taxpayer-funded spending sprees. Enough of trapping people in a cycle of dependence, because a culture of dependency is a culture in decline.

I say we work together to encourage people to seize the many opportunities in our country, not have them wait around hoping the government will fix every problem life throws their way. We can't do that. It is long past time we get back to teaching folks to fish, to learn to fish themselves, to be self-reliant. That is a culture of hard work and resilience. That is a culture of the United States of America, the best country on the face of the Earth.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHINA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, this has already been a big week in Tokyo for Team USA, and I hope all of my colleagues have the opportunity to watch a few minutes of the Olympic Games over the next few weeks.

Every year, we hear so much from commentators and athletes about how

the Games are an opportunity for the world to come together, and that is exactly how it once was. Unfortunately, the Olympics are also a target-rich environment for people and regimes that want to use these rare moments of unity to trick the world into ignoring evil.

Before we were able to enjoy any of this year's double-pike vaults or 400-meter freestyle swims, we were already worrying about the impending havoc casting a shadow over the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Late last year, the Chinese Government began pilot testing a new digital currency that will inevitably knock other domestic mobile payment systems out of the marketplace.

The digital yuan trial has already pulled in \$5.3 billion—that is correct, \$5.3 billion—in transactions, and this month we learned that cross-border payments are also on the table. In fact, the trial has been so successful that Beijing wants to expand testing at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Now, as much as I would like to believe that this is an innocent effort to bring the world a little closer together, this is the Chinese Communist Party that we are talking about, and we shouldn't expect good faith because that is not what we are going to get from the CCP. We have reason to believe that the Chinese Government intends to use the digital yuan to conduct a massive surveillance operation on Chinese citizens and foreign visitors.

It wouldn't be the first time something like this happened. The CCP has an unfortunate history of weaponizing emerging technologies against people they would like to control. They used it against the Uighurs, against freedom fighters in Hong Kong, and on the mainland against anyone who questions their party propaganda.

They are already using digital payment platforms to spy on their own people; and if we are not careful, they are going to use them to spy on Team USA.

This month, I sent a letter to the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee asking them to forbid our athletes from accepting or using the digital yuan while competing in Beijing.

The threats are changing, and far too often we see our allies and partners and even our own government ignoring those threats to preserve the status quo.

You may be asking yourself: Why is so much of the world willing to look the other way when confronted with genocide in Xinjiang or murdered protesters in Hong Kong?

It is because speaking up can be dangerous, especially when it comes to challenging the CCP.

China boasts the most in-demand market in the world. In fact, it is such a gold mine that you will recall the NBA ignored large-scale child abuse at its training camps in China just to maintain access to broadcast advertising and merchandise revenue.